

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-10, 87-89, 91-94, and 96 are currently pending. Claims 5, 11-20, 90, and 95 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer; and Claims 1, 9, and 10 have been amended by the present amendment. The amendments to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 87-89, 91-94, and 96 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Application Publication No. 2001/0010706 to Sato et al. (hereinafter “Sato”); Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sato and U.S. Patent No. 6,590,902 to Suzuki et al. (hereinafter “Suzuki”); and Claims 5, 90, and 95 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication that Claims 5, 90, and 95 include allowable subject matter.

This amendment is submitted in accordance with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 which after final rejection permits entering of amendments canceling claims, complying with any requirement of form expressly set forth in a previous Office Action, or presenting rejected claims in better form for consideration on appeal. The present amendment amends the claims to include allowable subject matter, thereby placing the present claims in a condition for allowance.

Applicants submit that this amendment does not add new matter and does not raise new issues requiring further consideration and/or search. It is therefore respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered under 37 C.F.R. §1.116.

¹ Independent Claims 1, 9, and 10 have been amended to include the subject matter included in allowable Claims 5, 90, and 95, respectively.

In order to expedite prosecution of this application to allowance, independent Claims 1, 9, and 10 have been amended to include the features previously recited in dependent Claims 5, 90, and 95, respectively. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of dependent Claims 5, 90, and 95, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 9, and 10 are in condition for formal allowance.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that dependent Claims 2-4, 6-8, 87-89, 91-94, and 96, which directly or indirectly depend from Claims 1, 9, or 10, are also in condition for formal allowance

Consequently, in view of the indication of allowability, no further issues are outstanding and entry of the present amendment is believed to be in order. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

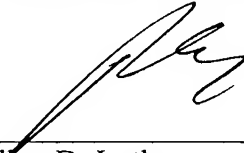
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